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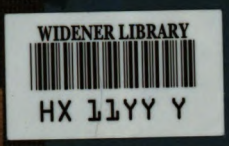

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(H.C. 1854),
3 May, 1873.

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SERMON.

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THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER APPROVING HIMSELF
BY
HIS VIEWS, HIS LABOURS AND HIS TRIALS:

A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE

NEW MEETING-HOUSE, IN BIRMINGHAM,

MARCH 24, 1833;

BEING THE CENTENARY

OF

THE BIRTH OF DR. PRIESTLEY,

BY

JOHN KENTISH.

Unshaken, Unseduced, Unterrified,
His PIETY he kept, his love, his zeal.
MILTON.

BIRMINGHAM:
PRINTED AND SOLD BY JAMES BELCHER AND SON;
SOLD IN LONDON
BY R. HUNTER, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD.
1833.

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Horace H. Furness,
of Philadelphia.
(B. 26. 1854.)

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TO

THE CONGREGATION

OF THE

NEW MEETING-HOUSE, IN BIRMINGHAM;

AND TO

JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, Esq.

AND THE MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY,

THIS SERMON

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

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COMPLIANCE with the request to deliver a discourse, on occasion of the hundredth anniversary of Dr. Priestley's birth, was dictated at once by inclination and a sense of duty. But the writer would have refrained from committing his sermon to the press, had he not also been honoured with a solicitation to that effect, from the Society of the New Meeting-house; a solicitation, in which they were affectionately joined by his illustrious predecessor's nearest descendants, Joseph Priestley, Esq. of Cradley, and the Members of his Family.

To witness another CENTENARY of the same event, can be the lot of very few

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individuals now existing. Yet, amidst the consciousness of *mortality* and *changé*, we possess the cheerful assurance, that, under the government of Omnipotent Love, the progress of Religious and Civil Society, will then have been wonderfully advanced; and that human affairs are going on from good to better,

" And Better thence again, and Better still,
In infinite progression."

J. K.

Birmingham, April 13, 1833.

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A

SERMON,

&c. &c.

II. COR. VI. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

—— IN ALL THINGS APPROVING OURSELVES AS THE MINISTERS OF GOD; IN MUCH PATIENCE, IN AFFLICTIONS, IN NECESSITIES, IN DISTRESSES—— IN LABOURS, IN WATCHINGS —— BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE, BY LONG SUFFERING, BY KINDNESS, BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, BY LOVE UNFEIGNED. BY THE WORD OF TRUTH, BY THE POWER OF GOD, BY THE ARMOUR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, ON THE RIGHT HAND, AND ON THE LEFT. BY HONOUR AND DISHONOUR, BY EVIL REPORT AND GOOD REPORT; AS DECEIVERS, AND YET TRUE.

MAN's power of looking back upon the past, can hardly be so well employed as in a review of those individuals of our race who have rendered themselves eminent by personal virtue, and by services of great importance to

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the world. In almost every age we have been supplied with examples of this class. Whether they actually come before our eyes, or are reflected from the mirror of History, the contemplation of them is our privilege and our duty. The sight or the recollection of such men, tends to refresh and cheer the mind, amidst much prevailing degeneracy: it shows, of what our nature is capable, when aided and sustained by the best principles of conduct. It addresses some of our finest sympathies, and animates our desire of copying after patterns that we reverence and love: it points out significantly the path of solid glory and happiness; and gives us an interest in human characters, which perhaps nothing else can so effectually inspire.

For these reasons, the practice of COMMEMORATING, at stated periods, the signally wise and good among mankind, claims to be approved by us: for these reasons, it is highly desirable that we follow it, in cases where it becomes a just tribute to departed worth and usefulness; themselves of no com-

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mon order, and formed, disclosed, and increased, by no common series of events. The obligation gains additional force, when, either personally, or in our social connexions, we cherish, with more than usual gratitude and respect, the memory of a celebrated individual; when, after the flight of years, we perhaps can make a yet fairer estimate of his labours and his trials, of what he did, what he endured, and what he was; when much of what was indiscriminate in the censure of him, and in the praise, too, will have ceased; and when Posterity, more deliberate and impartial than his contemporaries, and viewing his merits not by either a dazzling or an intercepted, but by a softened, yet a full, a steady and a clear light, will pronounce a sound, and therefore, to his enlightened friends, a welcome judgment on his character and pretensions, and own that he was a powerful and valiant champion of Truth, an innocent, a conscientious and exemplary sufferer in what he deemed, and what is indeed, the noblest of all causes.

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That cause is RELIGION. So naturally, and so appropriately, does the commemoration of the individual, to whom I am alluding, harmonize with the employments of the day consecrated immediately to our social Christian worship, and of the edifice whose walls periodically and emphatically remind us of DR. JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, the former illustrious Pastor of our congregation. Coming up hither, my brethren, in our wonted practice, it now happens that we have assembled on the CENTENARY of his birth. Can our sensibilities fail of being touched by an event so memorable, by an event so deeply interesting?

I pray that, under the Divine Blessing, we may suitably improve it: and I have therefore read to you a passage, of which it seems impossible not to discern the application to *the Christian minister and divine approving himself truly such by his views, his labours and his trials.* Not that we claim for him apostolical infallibility, or do not justly discriminate between inspired and uninspired

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men; between the very peculiar circumstances of Paul of Tarsus, and those of pastors, who, however faithful, zealous, intelligent and able, had neither his special mission nor his supernatural gifts. Allowing, nevertheless, for this evident and wide variety of situation, I scruple not to affirm that in few individuals have the words before us been so remarkably verified as in him, on whose history and character our attention will now be fixed.

Previously to what I shall further say of him, I will endeavour to lay before you a sketch of his life, in its leading events and important bearings.

Joseph Priestley was born, March 13, 1733, [O. S.] at Fieldhead, in Yorkshire. The dissenting ministry was the object of his choice from his childhood: and he enjoyed the great advantages of a religious and literary education; his thirst for knowledge soon discovering itself, and gaining strength by gratification. Ill health, for some time, led his thoughts to mercantile life: but recovery

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ensued; and he resumed his original purpose, and was one of the earliest pupils of the Reverend Dr. Ashworth, at Daventry, where his ardent love of learning and of free inquiry was greatly increased; being perpetually called into exercise.

When his academical studies were finished, he became the minister of a Protestant Dissenting congregation at Needham-market, in Suffolk. Here he spent five years, and then removed, in the same character, to Nantwich, in Cheshire. In both these situations, he diligently carried on his philosophical and literary pursuits, was extremely attentive to the duties of his public office, and composed one or two able volumes for the press. At Nantwich he engaged with success in the office of teaching school.

Still happier prospects dawned upon him. He was invited to be Tutor in the languages in the Dissenting Academy at Warrington. Upon this charge he entered in the autumn of 1761, and continued in it six years. He

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soon felt the auspicious influence of the change, in enlarging his sphere of usefulness, in enabling him to form and enjoy the tenderly interesting relations of domestic society, and in affording him an opportunity of prosecuting studies, which he loved, and of being better known to the world, as an ingenious and useful author.

In 1767 he accepted an invitation to the Pastorship of the congregation at Mill-hill chapel in Leeds, where for six years he was very happy with a liberal, friendly and harmonious society. In this situation he renewed his attention to speculative Theology, and projected and executed some of his most important works. At Leeds, too, he made the observations and experiments, which formed the basis of his characteristic reputation as a discoverer in Pneumatic Chemistry, and "the precursor of that ardour for philosophical researches diffused throughout Europe, which promised and has brought about a new era in the progress of Natural Knowledge."

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From a just regard to the claims of his rising family, he consented, in 1773, to reside in the immediate neighbourhood of the Earl of Shelburne, afterwards Marquis of Lansdowne, as that nobleman's literary companion. It was an honourable and a happy connexion; in no degree involving the personal independence of Dr. Priestley, and supplying him with favourable occasions of visiting foreign countries, and of advantageously mixing with men of various classes and sentiments, and of recommending to them, after a friendly exchange of opinion, whatever he deemed true and interesting in the Natural philosophy which he continued to cultivate, as well as those Revelations of the Divine Will, to the illustration of the evidences and the doctrines of which he always dedicated a large portion of his time and thoughts.

In 1781, having amicably quitted his engagement at Lord Shelburne's, he made choice of Birmingham, as his residence, principally with a view to the peculiar facilities, which

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it gave him, for continuing his philosophical experiments. But, within a quarter of a year afterwards, the Reverend William Hawkes, resigned his office, as one of the pastors of the congregation of the New Meeting-house: and Dr. Priestley was unanimously chosen to be his successor. He considered his settlement in this town as the happiest event of his life; it being highly favourable to all his objects, philosophical and theological: and of the liberality and kindness of the religious society whom he served here, he repeatedly spoke with the liveliest gratitude. Active and useful as he had always been, he was now, if possible, more active and useful than ever. The ten years which he passed in this situation, were most assiduously and beneficially improved by him, in all his public characters, nor least as a christian minister: and his care and skill in imparting religious knowledge to the young people of his congregation were particularly memorable.

The riot, at Birmingham, in 1791, drove

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him from a town, to the prosperity and reputation of which he had in no small degree contributed, and from a Christian Society, to whom he was devoted and endeared. His honest zeal and intrepidity in the avowal of unpopular truth, gave umbrage to some large and powerful classes of men; while a sadly perverted and inflamed state of the public mind directed popular indignation against one of the best friends of his country and of his race. The chapel in which Dr. Priestley officiated, was destroyed: his dwelling-house and property, including his books, manuscripts and philosophical apparatus, shared the same fate; his life was threatened, and placed in extreme danger. Under these circumstances, he sought and found an asylum in the neighbourhood of the metropolis: nor was it long before he succeeded to the charge of the congregation which had been served by his late friend, Dr. Price. Still, however, the Bigotry of the day pursued, annoyed and menaced, without again forcibly attacking him: and, judging it, on the whole, expedient to quit

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England, in 1794, for the United States of America, he settled in the town of Northumberland on the Susquehanna; where, after continuing his labours in Philosophy and Theology, and occasionally resuming his services, as a minister, and after experiencing some heavy domestic afflictions, he died, February 6th, 1804, with the serenity, and cheerful and solid hope, which his belief in Christianity inspired. His deportment and conversation, in the near approach of Death, were remarkably interesting and instructive: and the record of them, by a most affectionate yet faithful pen, ought to be repeatedly and seriously perused by all that would form a just idea of the great and good man who is it's subject.

In reviewing the life and character of Dr. Priestley we find copious materials for reflection. Within the limits of such a discourse as this it would be impossible to do them justice. It is not only proper but essential that I restrict myself to the consideration of what he was as a Divine and

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Minister. This is not the place for attempting a description of his merits and services as a natural and especially as a chemical philosopher: and, even if it were, I should shrink from the attempt. An estimate of him in those characters,* has been already made by a competent judge: it is an estimate which possesses the capital advantage of so bringing us acquainted with the distinguishing features of his mind, in all it's excellencies, and in it's unavoidable, perhaps I might say, it's kindred defects, that it may nearly be regarded as a good analysis and representation of what he was in other departments of knowledge; nor least in Theology and Miscellaneous Literature.

Amidst his varied pursuits and attainments,

* I refer to a paper of Dr. Henry's, of Manchester, which he read, at the first meeting of the General Philosophical Association, at York, and which has a place in their Transactions. Other notices of the chemical discoveries, &c. of Dr. Priestley, may be seen in Sir John Pringle's Discourses at the Royal Society, pp. 3—42. and in the Appendix, No. I. to the first edition of the Memoirs, &c. [1806.]

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he set the first value on Theological studies, and was never so happy as in his preparations for discharging the duties of his profession, and in his performance of them. He frequently made this declaration: he made it with perfect truth.* His publications in Divinity are more numerous than his publications in any single branch of learning besides: indeed there is scarcely one division, or subdivision, of this department of knowledge, under which he has not written, and written preeminently well.

Under the head of the *Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion* we must place his first projected work, the *Institutes, &c.*† which has been frequently reprinted; though not more frequently than it deserves. Still more original, and, as I think, of the highest excellence, are his *Letters to a Philosophical Un-*

* See in particular his Memoirs, [ed. iv. 1833.] p. 40.

† He composed the first copy of this work when he was a student at Daventry, and published it in 1772; for the use of the younger members of his congregation at Leeds.

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believer,* and his *Discourse on the Resurrection of Jesus.*† To Dr. Priestley belonged the rare talent of setting these subjects, notwithstanding they had been so often treated of, in a new and striking light: and he has again and again illustrated, with a felicity all his own, *the philosophical argument for Christianity;* the proof of it's truth, deduced from the laws of the human mind, in connexion with those of testimony.

Another field of Theology, in which he laboured with industry and effect, was the general *Illustration of the Scriptures.* Besides a number of detached tracts and essays, written by him for this purpose, his *Harmony of the Gospels*, and his *Notes on the books of the Old and the New Testament*, avouch the fact.

* His immediate successor at Leeds, the late Rev. Wm. Wood, pronounced these Letters "the completest and best of all his works." Funeral Sermon for Dr. Priestley, p. 15. Bishop Percy strongly recommended the perusal of them to Mr. Pinkerton. See Pinkerton's Correspondence: vol. i. 147.

† Composed and preached, at Buxton, in 1790.

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In *Controversial Theology*, he engaged largely; because he cherished a supreme love of religious truth, and knew that without controversy it cannot be declared, maintained, vindicated and diffused. Not that he attacked on so many occasions as he defended. To expose the "Corruptions of Christianity," and to restore, if possible, it's purity, were favourite objects of this man of comprehensive views and generous aims. He has therefore recommended, both in popular tracts, and in works indicating considerable research and study, what he believed to be the unadulterated doctrines and institutions of the Gospel: and this he has done with his characteristic perspicuity, ingenuousness and vigour.

Intimately allied to the most important of his controversies in Divinity were his studies and his services in *Ecclesiastical History*. On that indispensable part of theological Learning he had bestowed much attention, from an early period of his life: and on one division of it—I mean, *The history*

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of the opinions of the primitive church respecting the person of Jesus Christ—he has thrown a flood of pure, effulgent and unborrowed light. His capital deductions and reasonings on this topic appear to me impregnable: in some few of his collateral statements he may not be equally victorious.

There is a most interesting class of his publications, which regards *Protestant Dissent:* or, perhaps I should rather say, the cause of *Protestantism;* of which I consider nonconformity from a national established church, as the natural and just result, in the minds and the conduct of all men who are governed by enlightened religious principle. He who imagines that *Protestantism* is a set of doctrines opposed to the doctrines of the Church terming itself *Catholic*, knows nothing of the controversy: he who fails to perceive that the question is between *Divine* and *Human* authority in matters pertaining unto God, is unacquainted with what the word *Protestant* denotes, both historically and in all just and consistent reasoning. Against

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civil establishments of Christianity few men have argued so zealously as Dr. Priestley, and none more ably: and for arguing against them, he encountered sufferings, which served further to prove the irreconcileableness of these institutions with pure religion, and with free and equal and peaceable civil government. But to this part of his character and history I shall have occasion of referring more particularly, before my address to you is finished.

It is pleasing to contemplate him in the walks of *Devotional and Practical Theology.* In these I am desirous of inviting general attention to his signally meritorious labours. He has filled so large a space in the public eye, as the strenuous opponent of established and popular errors, that his services in some other characters, nor least in the character of which I am now speaking, have been comparatively overlooked. Yet from Dr. Priestley's writings I could make extracts, moral and religious, that would occupy no

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diminutive volume, and that contain most impressive, beautiful, original and momentous sentiments in respect of what men are, what they ought to be, and what are their advantages and expectations. His *catechisms for children and young persons,* his *prayers for families and for Christian Unitarian Societies,* and his masterly *sermons on habitual devotion, the duty of not living to ourselves, and the danger of bad habits,* attest both the versatility of his talents and the deeply-rooted piety, benevolence and holiness of his soul.

I have enumerated only a few of his publications in Theology: I have purposely refrained from specifying more, because neither my time admits enlargement nor does my object require it—sufficient, I presume, having been said to represent Dr. Priestley's superior excellencies as a Divine. His theological studies began and were pursued and concluded with a perpetual reference of them to the Scriptures, which he had well qualified himself for reading in the original languages; a qualification in the absence of

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which no man can with decency adventure to be a public teacher of Revealed Religion.

That Dr. Priestley was a richly instructed and faithful Minister of Christianity, there are those of you, my brethren, who can with truth affirm, from your lively, grateful recollection of his services, both in the House of Prayer, and in private. He has with perfect justice been described as "a serious and rational preacher of the practical morality of religion, but without the least pretension to oratorical ornaments, or the affectation of them."* Indeed he possessed vastly superior claims on your esteem. He conducted the devotions of the congregation with admirable simplicity and gravity, was "a regular and sincere expounder of the Scriptures," and made a point of statedly addressing you, on tópics of the deepest import, in a style alike intelligible and pleasing to all classes of his hearers. It was in the Lecture-room however that he con-

* Hutton's Philosophical and Mathematical Dictionary, 2nd. ed: [*Article, Priestley.*]

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ferred on you the most substantial advantage, which a Christian Society can receive: it was by "his peculiar diligence in training up your youth to rational piety and genuine virtue," that he laid the basis of your chief and habitual veneration of his memory. The Biographer of Watts gives appropriate praise to that man of elevated genius and devotion, "in providing instruction for all ages; even for those who are lisping their first lessons."* It is commendation which belongs not to Watts exclusively. I must extend and apply it to Dr. Priestley, with whose name it will, in *your* minds especially, ever be associated. You saw this individual of widely spread philosophical and literary fame cheerfully meeting his classes not only of persons advancing to manhood, but of some, too, who, as I know, were, literally, *lisping their first lessons:* you saw him enlivening them by his presence, and greatly enlivened by theirs; and you heard him, delivering, with parental affection and tenderness, and

* Dr. Samuel Johnson. Life of Watts.

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in language suited to the humblest capacity, truths which lie at the foundation of all religious knowledge and practice. There are even those before me, to whom he was the main, if not the only, instrument of communicating that early acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, which, I trust, has rendered them wise unto salvation.

It was not possible for him to be so valuable as a minister, without being consistent and exemplary as a Christian. Bigotry itself, in it's gloomiest moods, or in it's most frantic outrages, ventured not to arraign his personal character, nor found occasion against him, except concerning the law of his God. He was so free from any thing like what is ostentatious or affected; so entirely disinterested; so pleased to commend, and so reluctant to blame, and so ready to do good; so unassuming in the sunshine of his prosperity, so cheerful, so composed and gratefully submissive to the Divine Will amidst his numerous and severe trials, that all who knew him, in the intercourses of friendship and

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society, paid at least the same high respect to his virtues which they paid to his splendid talents and attainments—while some men who saw him but occasionally, and judged only from appearances, could with difficulty bring themselves to believe that an individual of manners so unpretending, meek and gentle, was, at the same time, a philosopher of the first celebrity.

May we not then justly say of your former pastor that "in all things he approved himself as the minister of God; in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distress, in labours, in watchings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by a holy spirit, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, which is the power of God, by the armour of righteousness, on the right hand and on the left"—being completely fortified by Faith and Hope—"by honour and dishonour; by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true?"—For his sincerity, if ever it was most strangely and unreasonably questioned, will now be admitted by reflecting

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persons of all denominations: and, since the rules of *historical evidence* are one thing, and the application of the principles of *interpretation* is another, it can by none be equitably denied that he was a most cordial and able defender of the divine origin of christianity.

Will any man object that Dr. Priestley attacked too eagerly what he considered as important errors? I answer, if you prove him to have *exceeded* in zeal, let his memory stand chargeable with the excess. But, meeting the charge, as I shall meet it, in relation to his character and writings generally, I deny what is so asserted or implied. I hesitate not at maintaining that the intrepid ardour of this great man for what he thought, and what we, for the most part, think, religious and moral truth, was proportioned to the immense magnitude of the object. No where, and least of all here, would I forbear to praise and warmly admire a quality, to which, directed and manifested as it has been, in several ages and countries, by a few favoured individuals, the world is indebted, under God, for it's

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swifter progress from darkness to light, from barbarism to civilization, from spiritual tyranny and degradation, to the liberty and truth which are in Christ Jesus. The Wickliffes, the Luthers, the Galileos, the Bacons of their times, were all deemed too zealous, in their respective spheres and labours; and some of them were imprisoned, and all calumniated, in consequence. But, humanly speaking, what had been the result, if they had quailed before the frowns of Power; nor fearlessly taught what, they were sensible, it was deeply interesting for mankind to learn?

These observations apply, and are designed to apply, to Dr. Priestley's characteristic frankness and courage in stating whatever he regarded as Scriptural and momentous: they apply, and are designed to apply, to his uniform, uncompromizing zeal against national church establishments, both in principle and detail. To Cæsar he strictly rendered Cæsar's dues, but could not acknowledge a *parliamentary religion.* In religious concerns he called no man *master* upon earth: he called

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not even *Hartley* so; yet Hartley, himself a churchman, speaks, within the compass of a few sentences,* in equally strong, or even stronger, terms of the antichristian nature and evil tendency of such institutions. Let the question, however, be determined by the testimony of Experience and Observation; and not by the authority of even the highest names. To evidence Dr. Priestley invariably appealed, on this and every topic of investigation: and we the more honour his memory, because, addressing the judgment of men, and not their passions, he has ingenuously declared the result of his own convictions.

Every man, remarks the author of the text,† *has his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.* I wish that we were mindful of this truth in our estimate of the characters and services of celebrated men. Neither in this particular case, nor in the general commerce of life, should we form

* Observations on Man, &c. Part ii. ch. iv. § 2, prop. 82.

† I. Cor. vii. 7.

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or encourage inconsistent expectations. There are very few individuals who possess all the mental faculties in the fullest mutual proportion. We may divide those faculties into two grand classes; the *reasoning* and the *imaginative.* The powers which constitute the correct, the successful, and even the inventive philosopher, or scholar, and those which belong more immediately to persons of taste and fancy and the liveliest susceptibility of emotion, will seldom be found together.* It is well, I think, for the individuals themselves, and for the world, that they are not so combined. Let us not apply then to Dr. Priestley's character any unfair or fallacious test, furnished merely by our own previous, and, it may be, arbitrary, conceptions: let us take that character as it actually subsisted; not describing it by negatives, but pointing out it's real elements, materials and combinations—and comparing it, if compare we must, simply with

* They were not united even in Lord Verulam, in Sir Isaac Newton, or in Dr. Bentley, whose critical sagacity and discriminating and reasoning talents were so great. In Milton the union was almost, if not exactly, complete.

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characters of it's own order. In making these observations, I am far from granting that he was not a man of devotion and moral sensibility, or not alive to the beauties of nature and art, and to the charms of poetry. To his works and to his life I refer, as proving the contrary: nor should it be forgotten that his noble discourse on *habitual devotion* called forth, almost on the spot and in the hour of the delivery of it, one of the finest effusions of even a *Barbauld's* muse. Of the fact that he felt tenderly and powerfully, on the sublimest of all themes, and expressed himself in accordant language, his fine dedication of one of his philosophical treatises to Dr. John Jebb is especially an example, the force of which it would seem impossible to resist.

A Century has passed since his birth. Of what mixed and of what great events has the interval been fruitful! Who, too, but must perceive the share of such a mind as Dr. Priestley's in bringing about, under Providence, the grand improvements that we welcome? It was his distinction, and, notwith-

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standing all he suffered, his happiness, to go far beyond his age in attainments and conceptions. Assuredly, he took not his character from that age, on which however his general labours and example have, by degrees, made an impression, which perhaps will be the more salutary, as the effect of the process being gradual. Let us bless the Father of spirits and Ruler of the Universe, who, at the "seasons which he hath put in his own power," raises up such men to advance the moral regeneration of the world; men of commanding energy, active spirits and never-tired resolution; men whose faculties soar above all the disadvantages attendant on their lot, and who become eminently the lights of their species and the salt of the earth.

My brethren! We enjoy no common privilege, in witnessing, both locally and nationally, the contrast of our days with the state of public feeling and opinion half a century ago. But the privilege brings with it an obligation. In certain respects, we cannot be what Dr. Priestley was. All of us, however, may, if

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we please, imitate him, by carrying *religion* into the pursuits and scenes of daily life: we can all be so far what he was, if we give heed to those of his admirable counsels, with which I conclude this discourse:*

"The most exact knowledge of truth, and the greatest zeal for it, will avail nothing without the practice of those virtues, which the most uninstructed of mankind perfectly understand. Nay, the more knowledge we have of the Christian religion, of the general plan and object of it, the more inexcusable shall we be, if we do not, in the first place, take care to impress our hearts with that *love of God*, and that unreserved devotedness to his will, which our Saviour calls *the first and greatest of all the commandments*, and also with that disinterested good will to our fellow creatures, which he calls *the second great commandment, and like unto it.*

"He was himself equally exemplary with respect to them both: and it is in vain for

* Preface to the Discourses on Habitual Devotion, &c.

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us to pretend to be *Christians*, if we do not study to resemble him (whom alone we are to acknowledge in the character of Lord and Master) in the disposition of our minds, and in the conduct of our lives. May we all be so attentive to discharge our proper duty, and to improve the talents, with which we are severally intrusted, that when, according to his promise, *he shall return and take an account of his Servants, we may be found without spot and blameless.*"

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ERRATUM.

p. 14, note *, l. 5, for *them*, read, *The Institutes, &c.*

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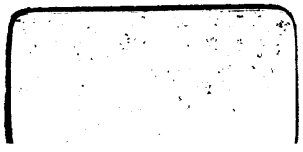

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